About Students

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HARIJAN

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GANDHIJI'S POST-PRAYER SPEECHES

Calcutta, 24-8-'47

DR. RAY

In thanking the Corporation for the address, Gandhiji said he could not help recalling the late Dr. P. C. Ray under whose roof he had lived for one month in 1901. When he was with the late Deshbandhu, he used to see him with a few scientific friends engaged in lively but strictly scientific conversation under the shadow of the Orchelony Monument near which they had met. That was their recreation. He asked him whether they had any drinks or eatables. He emphatically said, "No." Their food and drink consisted of their instructive as distinguished from idle conversation.

THE CORPORATION ADDRESS

Referring to the address Gandhiji said that this was the third time he was receiving an address from the Corporation. The first was given to him by the Deshbandhu when he was the Mayor. Then at the hands of Nalini Babu when he was the Mayor. He recalled the fact that the caskets were then auctioned in the interest of the Harijans. He hoped that this casket too would be sold in the same interest by the Mayor.

A GENTLE REBUKE

He would repeat what he had said in answer to the first address that he could not be satisfied till Calcutta had become the premier city in the world for sanitation. He included in this the sanitation of the streets in Calcutta which was absent today. The citizens should have healthy minds in healthy bodies. Then they would have no *goondas*, no vagabonds, no drunkards. If the mortality in Calcutta was to be reduced, Calcutta should be flowing with clean milk. Today it was a most difficult commodity to procure. Then he would expect the corporators, by honest application, to put the friendship between the Hindus and the Muslims on a permanent footing in the manner Shaheed Saheb had pointed out.

CHITTAGONG

Gandhiji said that he had a message from Khwaja Saheb Nazimuddin that he (Gandhiji) should help in procuring at least 500 tons of rice out of the shipment that was coming from Burma. The need was so urgent that the ship with the rice should be diverted to Chittagong to deliver the 500 tons. He gladly associated himself with the request and he hoped that Dr. Rajendra Prasad would, if it was at all possible, allow 500 tons of the precious cargo to be delivered at the Chittagong port.

In this connection he could not help mentioning the complaint that petty officials in charge of flood relief confined the distribution to Muslim sufferers only. He hoped the news was not true. If unfortunately it was, he had no doubt that the ministers and high rank officials would redress the wrong. If the two dominions were to live creditably and as friends, the communal spirit would be wholly purged. It was up to the Hindu and Muslim leaders to see that the seeds of poison that were sown, while they were fighting, would be removed forthwith. Then he said he deplored the fact that the Muslims in Government services, when the choice was offered to them, preferred Pakistan and the Hindus, the Indian Union. The choice was made, he did not doubt, in haste. He would be sorry to find that the communal virus had entered the services. He advised that the two Premiers should confer with each other and if it was at all honestly possible, the services should be given the opportunity to reconsider their choice. It would be a sorry thing for India if Hindu officials could not be trusted by Muslims and vice versa. Much would depend upon the leaders who influenced the services and the public.

Lastly, he had heard that Khulna was to celebrate its entry into Pakistan. He deplored such celebration after the award. But he was consoled by Shaheed Saheb that the celebration would be joint and that the Hindus were associating with it. Nevertheless, he could not regard the example with happiness. The jubilant parties ought to restrain themselves, as the aggrieved ones should accept the award with perfect resignation. It must be regarded as final except to the extent that the ministers of the two dominions agreed to vary it for the mutual satisfaction of the parties concerned. There was no other worthy or gentlemanly way.

Calcutta, 25-8-'47

FRIENDSHIP

"I am sorry that today being my silence day I cannot speak to you. I have, therefore, to write out what I wish to say to you. I have been speaking every day about the vital duty of the Hindus in Western Bengal, who are the majority community, towards their Muslim brethren. This duty they will perform truly, if they are able to forget the past. We know how all over the world enemies have become fast friends. The example of the Britons and the Boers who fought one another strenuously, becoming friends we all know. There is much greater reason why the Hindus and the Muslims should become friends. We cannot do that if we are not great enough to shed all malice.

SYLHET

"This evening I wish to devote to Sylhet. I have received frantic telegrams from Sylhet about the serious riots that have broken out there. The cause is not known. I am sorry that I am unable to go just now to Sylhet, nor am I vain enough to think that my presence would immediately abate the mob fury. I know, too, that one should not without peremptory cause abandon his present duty, however humble it may be, in favour of one which may appear to be higher. To adopt the salvation army language, we are all soldiers of God to fight the battle of right against wrong, by means which are strictly non-violent and truthful. As His soldiers, ours is "not to reason why", ours is "but to do and die". Though, therefore, I am unable to respond to the urgent call of the sufferers of Sylhet, I can appeal, not in vain, to the authorities in East Bengal in general and Sylhet in particular, to put forth their best effort on behalf of the sufferers and deal sternly with the recalcitrants. Now that there is peace between the Hindus and the Mussalmans, I am sure the authorities do not relish these ugly outbreaks. It would be wrong and misleading to underestimate the trouble by calling it the work of *goondas*. The minorities must be made to realize that they are as much valued citizens of the State they live in, as the majority. Let the Premiers of the two divisions of Bengal meet often enough and jointly devise means to preserve peace in the two States and to find enough healthy food and clothing for the inhabitants and enough work for the masses in East and West Bengal. When the masses, Hindu and Muslim, see their chiefs acting together and working together honestly, courageously and without intermission, the masses living in the two States will take the cue from the leaders and act accordingly. To the sufferers I would advise bravely to face the future and never to give way to panic. Such disturbances do happen in the lifetime of a people. Manliness demands there should be no weakness shown in facing them. Weakness aggravates the mischief, courage abates it."

The above message was written out in English in order to enable Nirmal Babu easily to render it in Bengali. But as owing to heavy rains Gandhiji and party reached the meeting at 6 p. m. instead of 5 p. m. and as there were only a few minutes left to break the silence and as Shaheed Saheb was to speak, Gandhiji was able to speak at the meeting.

A GENTLE REBUKE

He first apologized to the vast audience for having to stand or sit on the wet and muddy ground. He then referred to the insult that was done to Shaheed Saheb at a meeting held in honour of Major General Shah Nawaz in Howrah. The General had gently rebuked the men who were guilty of discourtesy.

Gandhiji said that the past must be forgotten and whilst they two were acting together for a common cause without mental reservations, the insult done to one was done to the other also. And as they together tried to represent Hindu-Muslim unity, the insult done to a Hindu or a Muslim was an insult done to the two partners.

CALL FROM THE PUNJAB

He then referred to the visit of Punjabi friends who pressed him to visit the Punjab as early as possible. He assured them that he was in constant correspondence with Panditji. After all, the Punjab was as much his as any other part of India; for, he claimed to be the servant of the whole of India. Moreover, he had passed six months in that Province during the Martial Law days. He would hasten to the Punjab as early as necessary. Indeed, he was wanted in Sylhet, Malda, Murshidabad and other places. It was not given to any one man to cover all calls upon his time nor was it healthy to depend upon man's assistance in times of trouble. It was manly and dignified to rely upon God for the dissolution of all troubles. He was the only infallible help, guide and friend.

AN APPEAL TO THE LANDLORD CLASS

He then pointed out that rehabilitation was not going on smoothly. The landlords seemed also to be in the way. They were in duty bound to invite and receive evacuees with open arms. He expected them not to charge or expect rents for months or days of enforced absence.

A PLEA FOR UNDERSTANDING

The last thing he referred to was a letter from a Muslim who described himself as a *sufi*. He had sent this communication through Shaheed Saheb. The purport was that in his opinion there was nothing common between Hinduism and Islam and that the two could not be as if they were one. For, he argued that the Hindus did not believe in one and only God but held cows and goats as superior to man and believed in high and low, whereas Islam was a brotherhood in which there was no hierarchy and which believed in one God as Allah. In this there was a caricature of Hinduism. There was no Hindu who put animals, the cow and the goat, before man. But he submitted that if anyone like him believed himself to be the lowest in God's creation, there was nothing wrong. It was a sign of true humility. He held that every Hindu believed in one and only God. He admitted that excrescences had grown round Hinduism and that its votaries had not always been true to Hinduism undefiled. It was, therefore, up to an impartial man to understand Hinduism as its votaries like him understood it, just as it was the duty of an impartial Hindu to understand Islam as a good Muslim understood it. That, he held, was the safest rule of interpretation for any faith. Then it would be found that all great religions sprung from the same source and the fundamentals were common to them all.

Calcutta, 26-8-'47

TOO SLOW

There was a huge crowd at the meeting and the audience was talking among themselves, creating a noise which, Gandhiji said, disabled him from speaking as he wanted to. As, however, a large part of the audience was patient, he said he would say a few words. He referred first to the fact that rehabilitation

was not proceeding as rapidly as could be wished. If the process was not completed in time and the evacuees did not return to their places, the peace, in spite of the very large meetings every day, would prove transitory. He drew pointed attention to the fact that the Lake Area was inhabited by rich men. If they made up their minds to do their duty, it was possible for them to make their contribution to the rehabilitation scheme. If the police but did their duty without fear or favour, he said, half the work would be done.

FUTURE OF THE ANGLO-INDIANS

He next referred to the visit he had from Anglo-Indian sisters and brothers. While he was not able to address them at a meeting, he would gladly mention them at one of his prayer meetings. During the foreign regime, they were a favoured community. He could not hold out any hope that the favoured treatment would be continued during independence. But they are entitled to the full justice that was the right of every citizen. The Anglo-Indians were as much citizens as any other group in India. It was the duty of both the Hindus and the Muslims to regard them as fully their equals and as brothers and sisters.

DANGER OF PAROCHIALISM

He then referred to the provincial spirit that seemed to be infecting the provinces. Thus, he saw in the papers that some Assamese thought that Assam belonged exclusively to the Assamese. If that spirit fired every province, to whom could India belong? He held that the people of all the provinces belonged to India and India belonged to all. The only condition was that no one could go and settle in another province to exploit it or rule it or to injure its interest in any way. All were servants of India and they lived only in the spirit of service. The same exclusive spirit was reported from Bihar against the Bengalis. The extreme instance reported was from Darjeeling. It was said that there was a Gurkha League whose business it was to resent the entry into Darjeeling of the plainsmen. They were reported to be resorting to force for the prosecution of their purpose. He hoped that the poison was confined to a very few young men who lacked imagination and love for India. He had the pleasure of meeting distinguished Gurkha officials who took pride in considering themselves part of India. He had provided the golden rule of conduct. No one could dare migrate to any province to its injury and no force should be used to attain one's end.

Calcutta, 27-8-'47

LABOUR

Gandhiji said that the present was his second visit to Motiaburz. The first was when Maulana Saheb Abul Kalam Azad and he visited them years ago because there was a fight between Hindu and Muslim workmen. Fortunately when they reached the scene of trouble, it was almost over but they got undeserved credit. The present was a happy occasion. The Hindus and the Muslims had adjusted their differences and had become friends. He hoped that this was a lasting friendship. He wanted to say a few words to the workmen in the working men's locality. He hoped that there was no distinction between the Hindus and the Muslims in labour. They were all labourers. If the communal canker entered the labour ranks, both would weaken labour and therefore, themselves and the country. Labour was a great leveller of all distinctions. If they realized that truth, he would like them to go a step further. Labour, because it chose to remain unintelligent, either became subservient or insolently believed in damaging capitalists' goods and machinery or even in killing capitalists. He was a labourer by conviction and a *bhangi*. As such his interests were bound with those of labour. As such he wished to tell them that violence would never save them. They would be killing the goose that laid golden egg. What he had been saying for years was that labour was far superior to capital. Without labour gold, silver and copper were a useless burden. It was labour which extracted precious ore from the bowels of the earth. He could quite conceive labour existing without metal. Labour was priceless, not gold. He wanted marriage between capital and labour. They could work wonders in co-operation. But that could happen only when labour was intelligent enough to co-operate with itself and then offer co-operation with capital on terms of honourable equality. Capital controlled labour because it knew the art of combination. Drops in separation could only fade away; drops in co-operation made the ocean which carried on its broad bosom ocean greyhounds. Similarly, if all the labourers in any part of the world combined together, they could not be tempted by higher wages or helplessly allow themselves to be attracted for, say, a pittance. A true and non-violent combination of labour would act like a magnet attracting to it all the needed capital. Capitalists would then exist only as trustees. When that happy day dawned, there would be no difference between capital and labour. The labour will have ample food, good and sanitary dwellings, all the necessary education for their children, ample leisure for self-education and proper medical assistance.

NATIONALIST MUSLIMS

Then he came to the Nationalist Muslims who had sent him the following note:

"You have expressed the opinion that the Nationalist Muslims should join the League. Then, does it imply that the Congress has now become a communal organization?"

Gandhiji said that he was not guilty of asking them to discard nationalism or of expecting the Congress to be another Hindu Sabha. He hoped that the Congress would never commit suicide by being a communal organization. When the Congress ceased to represent all who were proud to call themselves Indians, whether prince or pauper, Hindus, Muslims or any other, it will have destroyed itself. Therefore, he could not advise a Muslim Congressman to join the League if the condition of joining the League was to discard or suppress his Congress membership. He would vote for those resolutions of the League which were in the

(Continued on p. 314)

HARIJAN

September 7 1947

ABOUT STUDENTS

(By M. K. Gandhi)

A correspondent says:

"You have begun writing in time about the student world of India. Your opinion was highly necessary. The late H. G. Wells has somewhere described the students as 'Undergraduate Intelligence'. The exploitation of the half-baked student world is highly dangerous. It tears the students under exploitation from the essential work of study and its assimilation. In these critical times the harm done by the exploitation of 'Undergraduate Intelligence' recoils upon the exploiters. Your writing referred to above gives rise to one question: Was it not Gandhiji who first drew the students to politics? I know that this is not true. But it is necessary for you to reiterate your position.

"The second thing is: what should students' organizations do? What should be their objective? Today, as you know, students' organizations are considered as stepping stones to entrance into political life. Some exploit them for that purpose."

Only during this week I had the misfortune to experience what harm 'Undergraduate Intelligence' can do. I was invited by the Vice-Chancellor to address a students' gathering. Sad to say, they indulged in a hostile demonstration against Shaheed Saheb. Afterwards they came to reason and they repented. And they gave a demonstration of how half-baked intelligence could do right under wise guidance. This would be apparent from the report of my post-prayer speech in the current issue of the *Harijan*.

Let me hope that the rendering into Gujarati in the columns of the *Harijanbandhu* will be quite in keeping with the original in English. The English rendering is the translation of the speech that was delivered in Hindustani. But it has not been posssible to give properly edited Hindustani and its authorized English translation. Who could shoulder that burden? I have deprived myself of the assistance of Pyarelalji and Dr. Sushila Nayyar, who are engaged in better work. Rajkumari's services have been unavailable for several months. Now she has become a Minister.

If there is one compact students' organization, it can become a mighty instrument of service. Their objective can only be one: never for the purpose of finding a lucrative career but fitting themselves for the service of the motherland. If they were to do so, their knowledge would attain a great height. Agitation is only for those who had completed their studies. While studying, the only occupation of students must be to increase their knowledge. The education, as it is prescribed today, is detrimental, conceived in terms of the masses of India. It is possible to show that the present education has been of some use to the country. I regard it as negligible. Let no one be deceived by it. The acid test of its usefulness is this: Does it make, as it should, an effective contribution to the production of food and clothing? What part does the student world play in allaying the present senseless slaughter? All education in a country has got to be demonstrably in promotion of the progress of the country in which it is given. Who will deny that education in India has not served that purpose? Hence, one purpose of the organization should be to discover the defects of the present education and seek to remove them, so far as possible in their own persons. By their correct conduct they will be able to convert to their view the heads of education. If they do so, they will never be entangled in party politics. In the revised scheme, constructive and creative programme will naturally have its due place. Indirectly, their action will keep the politics of the country free of the spirit of exploitation.

Now for the first question: What I said in the matter of students' education at the time of the country's battle for freedom is evidently forgotten. I did not invite the students to devote themselves to politics whilst they were in schools and colleges. I had inculcated non-violent non-co-operation. I had suggested that they should empty these educational institutions and throw themselves in the battle for freedom. I had encouraged national universities and national schools and colleges. Unfortunately, the trap of the education given in our schools and colleges was too strong for the students. Only handful were able to disengage themselves from it. Thus, it is not proper to say that I drew the students to the politics of the country. Moreover, when after 20 years of exile in South Africa, I returned to India in 1915, the students, while they were engaged in their studies, had already been drawn to the political life. Probably, there was no other way. Our foreign rulers had so devised the whole life of the country that nobody could engage in politics suitable for the delivery of the country from bondage. The foreign rulers had so devised and controlled the education of the youth of the country that they remained under their control and millions were kept in comparative darkness. This was the way in which foreign control was rendered as permanent as possible. Therefore, apart from the colleges and schools controlled by foreign rulers, patriotic workers were not to be found. To what extent this foreign education was misused need not be considered here.

Calcutta, 30-8-'47

(Adapted from the original in Gujarati)

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QUESTION BOX

(*By M. K. Gandhi*)

Q. You have often stated while you were in Noakhali that failure of your mission there, would be the failure of your own *ahimsa* and not of *ahimsa* itself. In the light of what has been achieved here (Calcutta), do you think that your *ahimsa* has succeeded or is on the way to success?

A. It is a correct statement that has been attributed to me. *Ahimsa* is always infallible. When, therefore, it appears to have failed, the failure is due to the inaptitude of the votary. I have never felt that my *ahimsa* has failed in Noakhali, nor can it be said that it has succeeded. It is on its trial. And when I talk of my *ahimsa* I do not think of it as limited to myself. It must include all my co-workers in Noakhali. Success or failure would, therefore, be attributable to the aggregate of the activities of my co-workers and myself.

What I have said about Noakhali applies to Calcutta. It is too early to state that the application of *ahimsa* to the communal problem in this great city has succeeded beyond doubt. As I have already remarked, it is wrong to contend that the establishment of friendliness between the two communities was a miracle. Circumstances were ready and Shaheed Saheb and I appeared on the scene to take the credit for what has happened. Anyway, it is premature to predicate anything about the application. The first thing naturally is that we, the two partners, have one mind and are believers in *ahimsa*. That being assured, I would say that if we know the science and its application, it is bound to succeed.

Calcutta, 31-8-'47

THE NATIONAL FLAG

The *Chakra* figuring in India's National Flag has been widely described as the *Ashoka-Chakra*. But this description is not historically quite correct. It was not Ashoka who invented this *Chakra*. It was first conceived by his great *Guru*, the Buddha, who called it the *Dhamma-Chakka* in his first teaching at Sarnath which is known in Pali as the *Dhamma-Chakka-Pabattana-Sutta*. The meaning of this term is the inauguration of the Kingdom (*Chakka*) of Righteousness, the Rule of Right as against Might —what Gandhiji would call *Rama Rajya*, the ideal for which India stands. The Buddha's *Dhamma-Chakka*, again, is the successor of Vishnu's *Sudarshana Chakra*, the Cosmic Circle, within which is comprehended all that is, animate or inanimate (*Akhanda mandalakaram vyaptam yena chara-charam*—अखण्डमण्डलाकारं व्याप्तं येन चराचरम् ।). Thus the *Chakra* is possessed of a deep spiritual meaning. It was Ashoka's part to translate into stone in terms of visible form the Buddha's great ideal of *Dhamma-Chakka* at the place where it was first presented by him. Finally, the *Chakra* may be taken in Gandhiji's sense as a *Charkha*, the symbol of India's traditional economic system through the ages.

RADHA KUMUD MOOKERJI

[Professor Radha Kumud Mookerji brought the above note personally and on my drawing attention to the popular meaning of the *Sudarshana Chakra* as a symbol of violence, he said it was wholly wrong.
Calcutta, 31-8-'47 —M. K. G.]

WITH THE KASTURBA TRAINEES

The Kasturba trainees came to meet Gandhiji from their camp in Sahebnagar the other day. They were twentythree in number and were accompanied by three of their teachers. Gandhiji invited them to ask questions. One of the teachers had submitted a statement about her experiences with regard to the method of training itself. But Gandhiji did not wish to enter into the actual details of the training course; he was sure this had to be adjusted to the conditions and needs of rural Bengal and the details must naturally be worked out by the teachers from their own experience.

The question which Gandhiji took up for discussion was asked by one of the trainees: In view of the resistance encountered from the rural people and the numerous disappointments which they had to face, how would Gandhiji advise them to proceed, so that success could be ensured? Gandhiji began by saying that he was glad that a very fundamental question had been raised. He had, however, only one answer for it.

The education through which India had passed for over a century was essentially designed for a particular purpose. In order to feed the interests of capitalism, the entire economic life of India had been changed, the city had become the centre of gravity and not the village; the village had been dethroned from its position of supremacy and virtually been converted into a slum, kept as far away from the city as practicable. The educational system had been planned to supply the needs of this lop-sided economy. If, now, we wanted to create a new India, our outlook must be changed altogether. Democracy has to be built up inch by inch in economic, social and political life. Considering the magnitude of the task, it would naturally require a very stout heart to grapple with the problem.

To the trainees, his advice was one. They *must* be brave, intelligent and persevering. The villagers might not readily respond. They might even prove hostile. Many interests would have to be disturbed before the necessary change could be effected. But non-violent workers should choose the line of least resistance. They should suffer in their own person before they could aspire to gain the co-operation of the inert or hostile villagers. Day in and day out, they must persevere at their chosen task, whether it was village sanitation or the imparting of education to a few children, whom perhaps nobody else would care to touch. They might not have the resources to supply their own bread. But even then, through hunger, they must persist without resentment, without bitterness. *Then* only will their conduct strike the imagination of the villagers; and this element of surprise will open the way into their hearts. Once the inert mass has begun to yield, work will make rapid progress.

Another trainee then said that there were no signs of response from the villagers even after a year of patient work. Gandhiji comforted her by saying that one year's work was not enough. We had to sweep aside the accumulated debris of

centuries of subjugation. Even a life-time might not prove enough. If our education had been otherwise, we might not have perhaps yielded so readily to despondence. We had to steel our hearts and look towards the bright future to enable us to get out of the slough of despond. So long as we persevered, the struggle itself *was* victory. It was only courage of this kind which could lead India to the New Age.

Calcutta, 25-8-'47 N. K. BOSE

GANDHIJI'S POST-PRAYER SPEECHES

(Continued from p. 311)

nation's interest and against those which were contrary to the nation's interest. He had several Muslims of staunch faith in mind who were neither in the Congress nor in the League. He advised the Nationalist Muslim friends to join the League if they wanted to affect the Muslim masses. Real nationalists needed no encouragement from him or anyone else. Nationalism, like virtue, was its own reward. His one warning was that they should never think of power or bettering their worldly prospects by joining the one or the other organization. A nationalist would ever think of service, never of power or riches. There could be one President of the Congress or the League. Presidentship came by merit and strength of service. The League had become what it was, not by his or Congress cajoling. The Qaid-e-Azam was an able President, whom neither riches nor titles could buy. He was a front rank barrister and a rich man. Being the son of a merchant, he knew how to multiply his earnings as a lawyer by wise investments. This acknowledgment did not mean that Gandhiji liked all his ways or that the latter had led the Muslims in the right way. He had his differences with the Qaid-e-Azam and the League. But he could not withhold merit where it was due. It was, he hoped, clear to the Nationalist Muslims under what conditions he advised them to join the League.

Gandhiji then came to the question addressed to him by some members of the Azad Hind Fauj. But as rain began to pour heavily at the time and there was noise and restlessness in the meeting, he postponed dealing with the question for the next meeting.

Calcutta, 28-8-'47

STUDENTS

Gandhiji addressed after prayer the students of Calcutta. He said that he had done teaching in his own way from his early youth and probably the very first meeting he addressed after his return to India in 1915 was that of students. Since then he had addressed numerous student-meetings throughout his many wanderings in India. He was not new to them nor were they new to him. But of late years he had ceased to address meetings as he used to do before. He was, therefore, glad that he was able to address the students. Their Vice-Chancellor was good enough to see him about the evening's proceedings. He was nervous about the students' behaviour towards Shaheed Saheb. He said that he would have only the prayer and his usual after-prayer speech. It should not have been so. Everywhere there appeared to be anarchy in the student world. They did not tender obedience to their teachers and their Vice-Chancellor. On the contrary, they expected obedience from their teachers. It was a painful exhibition on the part of those who were to be the future leaders of the nation. They gave an exhibition of unruliness that evening. He was faced with placards in the foreign tongue depicting his comrade Shaheed Saheb in unbecoming language. He suggested to them that in as much as they had insulted Shaheed Saheb, they had insulted the speaker. Shaheed Saheb could not be insulted by the language used against him. But the speaker could not take up that attitude. The students should be, above all, humble and correct. They had an object lesson in their Vice-Chancellor. The Chief Minister, Shaheed Saheb and he sat on the platform provided for them but the Vice-Chancellor sat among the rest of the visitors. His humility reminded him of Krishna who, when Raja Yudhishthira performed his *yagna*, chose the menial work of washing the feet of the guests. Thereby he showed his innate nobility. The greatest to remain great had to be the lowliest by choice. If he could speak from his knowledge of Hindu belief, the life of a student was to correspond to the life of a *sannyasi* up to the time his studies ended. He was to be under the strictest discipline. He could not marry nor indulge in dissipation. He could not indulge in drinks and the like. His behaviour was to be a pattern of exemplary self-restraint. Had they lived at all up to the pattern, they would not have done what they did at the prayer meeting.

He then invited Nirmal Babu to translate that part of the speech if the audience wanted the translation in spite of the rain. They wanted it. The rain happily stopped during the translation. After it Gandhiji, at the instance of the meeting, delivered the second part of his speech.

NETAJI

The evening before he had a note from some members of the Azad Hind Fauj as to his opinion about them. He said that he had come in close contact with some of the officers of the Fauj. In referring to the Fauj he felt constrained to refer to Netaji who, he was of opinion, was dead in the body but lived in the servants of India. He had the pleasure of coming in touch with Subhas Babu when the latter had just returned from England with the determination to sacrifice a lucrative career that was open to him. He preferred selfless service to selfish ambition and placed himself under the Deshbandhu. Therefore, he was able to come in close touch with the speaker. Though Subhas Babu became a non-violent non-co-operator, he never saw eye to eye with the speaker in his unadulterated non-violence. His was a life full of perilous adventure and romance. His daring was unequalled. He scraped together an army composed of Indians drawn from all provinces, belonging to all religions and by his glorious example he had

infused into them the spirit of willing discipline and obedience. It was not a small thing for his handful of army which his genius had scraped together to offer battle to the mightiest empire of modern times. Gandhiji was told by the officers of the Azad Hind Fauj that Subhas Babu had advised the members of the army to carry out what he (Gandhiji) might suggest; for the struggle in India was of his (Gandhiji's) conception as the struggle outside India was of Netaji's. His answer to the question asked was that the members of the Azad Hind Fauj were not to expect to be absorbed in the current military ranks nor to be a separate unit of the army in any of the two parts of India. He held it to be impracticable at least for some time to come. The best thing for them was to work as a separate compact body of servants of India. It would be best for them to hold together on a plot of land, to turn their swords into ploughshares and grow more food for the hungry millions. If they did not like the suggestion, they should be absorbed into the civil life and serve the country. 'Once a soldier, always a soldier' would be a dangerous doctrine in free India. He had lived in South Africa for 20 years where every Boer was a first-class soldier when soldiering was necessary, otherwise he was a wonderful farmer. Such was General Botha. Such is Field Marshal Smuts. He is a great lawyer, a great farmer, owning a magnificent farm and everyone knew him to be a distinguished soldier. What was Netaji himself? Was he less than Field Marshal Smuts? Soldiering was never his profession. Today when India was shaking with communalism and fratricidal disturbances, let the members of the Fauj set a noble example of what they were under Netaji, who evoked such affection from his men that he (the speaker) had known his officers being unable to think of him without tears. Let them translate that affection into action. That in spite of all his affection and respect for Netaji, they had differences of opinion was a matter of no consequence. Such divergence would exist between the best of friends. Let the students too, whether they believed in violence or non-violence, understand that strictest discipline was common to both.

Calcutta, 29-8-'47

THE VANDE MATARAM SONG

At the meeting *Vande Mataram* was sung and the audience including Shaheed Saheb and the other Muslims on the platform stood up, Gandhiji alone keeping seated in the proper posture. Gandhiji, therefore, commenced his speech by congratulating Shaheed Saheb and the other Muslims on standing. He purposely kept seated because he had learnt that their culture did not require standing as a mark of respect when any national song or *bhajan* was sung. It was an unnecessary importation from the West. A respectable posture on such occasions was the correct attitude. After all, it was the mental attitude that mattered, not the superficial appearance. He then suggested that there should be one universal notation for *Vande Mataram*, if it was to stir millions; it must be sung by millions in one tune and one mode. After all, national songs could only be two or three. But they should all have their common notation. It was up to the Shantiniketan authorities or some such authoritative society to produce an acceptable notation.

INDIAN CHRISTIANS

Gandhiji then referred to the Christians. He had the pleasure of receiving them the day before. They said that the major communities had taken care of themselves but what was to happen to the Christian Indians? Were they to have no seats in the Governments or the legislatures? He told the friends that the poisonous favouritism of the foreign rule was dead and gone. Merit should now be the sole test. In a well-ordered society there should be no minority. Why should they not feel that they were of the forty crores, but not a mere handful in the forty crores? Whatever their religion, all born in India and proud of their birth were equal in the eye of the law. On the strength of merit i.e., intellectual capacity, self-sacrifice, courage and incorruptibility, a Christian could be the Chief Minister without exhibiting greater merit than a Hindu or Muslim. Religion was a purely personal matter. He expected that what was true of the Union was equally true of Pakistan. He asked his Christian brethren also not to take their Christianity as it was interpreted in the West. There they knew that they fought with one another as never before. After all Jesus was an Asiatic depicted as wearing the Arabian flowing robe. He was the essence of meekness. Gandhiji hoped that the Christians of India would express in their lives, Jesus, the crucified of the Bible, and not as interpreted in the West with her blood-stained fingers. He had no desire to criticize the West. He knew and valued the many virtues of the West. But he was bound to point out that Jesus of Asia was misrepresented in the West except in individuals.

ROLE OF THE MINORITIES

Then he answered the question whether the minorities would have recognition as religious minorities had. Thus, whether Bengalis of Bihar, though a minority, would have recognition? This was a ticklish question. In his opinion an Indian was a citizen of India enjoying equal rights in every part of India. Therefore, a Bengali had every right in Bihar as a Bihari. But he wished to emphasize that a Bengali must merge in the Bihari. He must never be guilty of exploiting Biharis or feeling a stranger or behaving as a stranger in Bihar. If the speaker brought his Gujarat manners in Bengal and imposed himself on the province, he would expect the Bengalis to expel him. He could not then claim the rights of an Indian as against Bengalis. All rights flowed from duties previously and duly performed. One thing he must stress that in both the Dominions of India, the use of force for the assertion of rights must be eschewed altogether if they were to make any progress. Thus, neither the Bengalis nor the Biharis could assert themselves at the point of the sword, nor could

the Boundary Commission Award similarly be changed. It was the first lesson to be learnt in a democratic independent India. Their independence was yet only a fortnight old. Liberty never meant the licence to do anything at will. Independence meant voluntary restraint and discipline, voluntary acceptance of the rule of law in the making of which the whole of India had its hand through its elected representatives. The only force at the disposal of democracy was that of public opinion. *Satyagraha*, civil disobedience and fasts had nothing in common with the use of force, veiled or open. But even these had restricted use in democracy. They could not even think of them whilst the Governments were settling down and the communal distemper was still stalking from one province to another.

Calcutta, 30-8-'47

Test of Amity

Gandhiji said that this was Shaheed Saheb's constituency. He was, therefore, glad that he was expected to visit Barasat. He noticed the absence of the Pakistan flag or the Muslim League flag. Why did not the Hindus of Barasat go out of their way to invite their Muslim brethren to fly the Pakistan flag side by side with the tricolour? That never meant that the Muslims were to impose the Pakistan flag or the League flag on the Hindus. He would apply the same rule where the Muslims were in a majority. If a Hindu girl was in their midst, they would encourage the solitary girl to unfurl the tricolour and recite *Ramadhun*. That was the sure sign of Hindu-Muslim friendship which then would be capable of bearing the severest strain upon it. No doubt, they learnt the daily tale of family strife in the Punjab. It had become difficult for the Muslims to live in the East and the Hindus and Sikhs in the West. Was there to be a transfer of crores of population? The way to stem the tide of this savagery and inhuman conduct was for the Hindus and Muslims of the two divisions of Bengal to preserve their equanimity intact and to demonstrate by their unbreakable friendship the way for all the communities to live. The way of mutual strife and exclusiveness was the way to perdition and slavery. If there was heart friendship, he could not understand the objection of Muslims, wherever they were in a majority, to be included in Western Bengal as in Murshidabad and Malda or for the Hindu majority, to be included in Pakistan. This was a sign not of friendship but of unworthy and mutual distrust.

The Gurkha League

He then referred to a letter he had received from the local Gurkha League saying that he was misinformed by his correspondent on the strength of whose letter he had issued his advice to the Gurkhas of Darjeeling. They contended that they claimed to be as much Indians as any. They could have no repugnance towards the Bengalis or the Marwadis who had settled in Darjeeling. But they expected Gandhiji to share their apprehension if they found the Bengalis or the Marwadis to be lording over them. Let them not be too proud of their learning or riches and treat the Gurkhas as if they were born to be bearers of burden. Would he not expect perfect equality among them and expect the Bengalis to lift them up by giving them a knowledge of letters and the Marwadis to share with them the secret of conducting honest trade? Gandhiji said that he had no hesitation in endorsing the Gurkha position and hoped that the Bengalis, Marwadis and others who had settled on that beautiful hill, would share with their Gurkha brothers their best and show them that they were their friends and servants, in no sense exploiters.

Bread and Cloth Labour

He then came to refer to a question which Professor Nirmal Kumar Bose had prepared for him as a result of discussions with him by visitors. What did he mean by bread labour and what was its application to the present state? The economics of bread labour were the living way of life. It meant that every man had to labour with his body for his food and clothing. If he could convince the people of the value and necessity of bread labour, there never would be any want of bread and cloth. He would have no hesitation in saying to the people with confidence that they must starve and go naked if they would neither work on the land nor spin and weave. They read in the papers that the whole of India was on the brink of starvation and nakedness. If his plan was accepted, they would soon find that India had enough food and enough *khadi* which the masses would produce for themselves. No doubt, they should be assisted in the matter of using the land wisely and should also be supplied with spinning and weaving accessories, and instructors. He added that he had not hesitated even to discuss his method with Mr. Casey who was taking keen interest in the water supply of Bengal. No doubt, Mr. Casey's was a gigantic scheme requiring years and tons of money. His was an efficient but unambitious and inexpensive programme.

Hindustani Prachar Examinations

Hindustani Examinations in 111 centres of Gujarat and Kathiawad will take place on Sept. 13, 14, 1947. In all the four examinations 4952 examinees will appear. This is an increase of 789 over the number which appeared in the last examination held in Feb. 1947. Last year, in 1946, 5381 examinees appeared in these examinations, while this year the number goes up to 9015.

Gujarat Vidyapith GIRI RAJ KISHORE

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